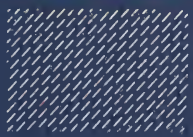
THE NATIONAL HERITAGE FELLOWSHIPS 1985



The National Heritage Fellowships 1985

The National Endowment for the Arts
Folk Arts Program

The National Endowment for the Arts is proud to present the Fourth Annual National Heritage Fellowships in a year when the agency and the nation are celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the Endowment. In this, the first public event of that milestone occasion, we are especially proud to honor a select group of our nation's foremost folk artists and artisans. All have been nominated for national honors by the general public; all have been judged worthy of such honors by both the advisory panel of the Folk Arts Program and the National Council on the Arts.

This year's twelve selected artists vividly demonstrate the extraordinary range of our national artistic patrimony. They hail from places separated by enormous distances—from Boise, Idaho to Morovis, Puerto Rico, from Honolulu to Philadelphia. They represent art forms old and new to our land--from Lakota Sioux quill embroidery to Appalachian string band music to Southeast Asian Hmong reed pipe playing. They come from eleven states and one territory to join the forty-eight artists already honored by the Endowment in the previous years. It is a very special company: an assemblage of remarkable people, reminding us forcefully of the artistic depth and cultural breadth that is our national heritage.

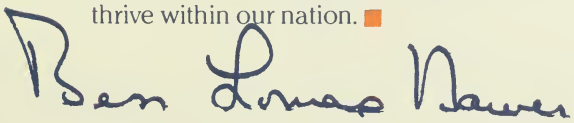
The National Endowment for the Arts welcomes the twelve artists described in this booklet to the distinguished company of National Heritage Fellows. We welcome, as well, the general public to the contemplation and enjoyment at this time. ■

F.S.M. Hodsoll
Chairman

This is the fourth year of the National Heritage Fellowships. Of all the activities assisted by the Folk Arts Program these fellowships are among the most appreciated and applauded, perhaps because they present to Americans a vision of themselves and of their country, a vision somewhat idealized but profoundly longed for and so, in significant ways, profoundly true. It is a vision of a confident and open-hearted nation, where differences can be seen as exciting instead of fear-laden, where men and women of good will, across all manner of racial, linguistic and historical barriers, can find common ground in understanding solid craftsmanship, virtuoso technique and deeply felt expressions.

The vision is the more significant and the more moving by being centered on everyday people, artists who don't particularly look or act like artists. And they have been brought to public attention by other everyday people, because the National Heritage Fellowships are open to all and this includes the nomination process. Nominations for Fellows—can be made by anyone. There are no forms.

It is worth noting, too, that each of these artists is a link to the past and the future, an authentic exponent of a traditional art form at a time in history. There were masters from whom he or she learned, and there will be masters, now youthful learners, in the future. In that sense, it is the art form that is most important—that particular set of skills and aesthetic visions into which, as folklorist Alan Lomax has noted, one branch of the human family has invested its genius through the centuries. This year we have a particularly glorious roster: one artist makes jewel-like ornaments out of porcupine quills, another creates complex rhythms with spoons, another builds an ancient pipe organ from bamboo and there are many more. We are happy that so many art forms thrive within our nation. ■



Bess Lomax Hawes
Director
Folk Arts Program

Eppie Archuleta

Eppie Archuleta learned to weave as a child, as soon as she could reach the loom. She was born in Santa Cruz, New Mexico, in the northern New Mexican mountains. Three generations of her family before her had raised their own sheep, carded, spun, and dyed the wool and woven the yarn into rugs and blankets. Her maternal and paternal great grandparents and her grandparents were weavers. Her mother, Agueda Martinez, has won a New Mexico Governor's award for the elegance and skillfulness of her weaving.

In the 1940s, Eppie Archuleta, her husband, and their eight children moved to the San Luis Valley in south-central Colorado where they worked the lettuce and potato fields and raised their own garden and their own sheep. Sra. Archuleta's work as a weaver could thus continue without interruption, and she soon found herself passing along her skills and her knowledge of traditional patterns and colors not only to her own children and grandchildren but to interested neighbors and friends. She also began to teach in a more formal way in the San Luis vocational schools and in the Artes del Valle Craft Cooperative. There is general agreement that her work as an artist and as an educator played a seminal role in the recent revival of local interest in traditional weaving and other fibre arts throughout the Hispanic communities of southern Colorado.

Eppie Archuleta by Rio Grande Arts Center

Eppie Archuleta's work reflects two strong Hispanic weaving traditions: the technically demanding old southwestern Rio Grande style and the more recent Chimayo style. In 1983, she was commissioned by Colorado Governor Richard C. Lamm to create the 1983 Governor's award for outstanding contributions to the arts in Colorado. The year's honorees were presented with rugs handwoven by Sra. Archuleta, an action that celebrated the richness and variety of the arts in Colorado and gave special recognition to the contributions of Hispanic culture within the state. ■

Alice New Holy Blue Legs

The art of porcupine quill decoration is a North American Indian craft practiced by no other people. Before European explorers and settlers introduced trade beads, porcupine quills were a primary medium used in the decoration of clothing and other artifacts among Woodlands and Plains Indians, most especially the Lakota Sioux. Quillwork is extremely complex, requiring the highest degree of painstaking skill and experience and great patience as well. Therefore, once trade beads became available, the faster, easier beadwork techniques replaced quillwork among the majority of Indian artisans.

In fact, quillwork nearly became a lost art. The New Holy family of Lakota Sioux who live on the rolling prairie land of the Pine Ridge Sioux reservation are given much of the credit for the survival of the art form during the seventies and eighties. Among this family, Alice New Holy Blue Legs is credited more than any other single person for maintaining the ancient skills, preserving the excellence of quillwork art, and passing it to others. She has taught her five daughters and her granddaughters as well, so well that not only her own work but that of her daughters is part of the permanent collection of the Smithsonian Institution. ■

Alice New Holy Blue Legs by H. Jane Nauman

Further, she has shared her knowledge with members of other Indian tribes as well as non-Indians through workshops, demonstrations and school residences in many states. She uses these occasions to communicate the cultural values of the Lakota people, telling the ancient tales, discussing the native plants on which she is an authority, and transmitting her knowledge across cultural barriers. She is a leader in the small community of Grass Creek where she lives and is especially concerned with the education and welfare of Lakota children. ■

PERIKLIS HALKIAS

Periklis Halkias was born some seventy years ago in the Epirot region of northern Greece, along the rugged mountains bordering Albania. He began playing clarinet at the age of ten and was honored with the title of professional folk musician by his community while still a young man. In the 1930s he journeyed down to the big city of Athens where he regularly played in the most prestigious folk music clubs of pre-World War II Greece. After the war he continued his career as a professional musician in Athens, returning frequently to the mountains of Epiros to refresh his musical inspiration and to play for local community festivals, wed-

Periklis Halkias by Robert Browning

dings and celebrations.

He came to the United States in 1964 and soon established himself as a prominent figure in the Greek nightclubs of that period along Manhattan's Eighth Avenue. He continues to this day to be recognized as one of the finest exponents of the Oriental style of clarinet playing, decorating his ancient melodies with lengthy virtuosic slides and graces. At a time when eclectic instruments, pan-Hellenic urban music ("bouzouki") and Western rock are replacing the ancient folk music traditions of Greece in their place of origin, the enthusiasm of Greek-American audiences for Periklis Halkias' music is even more significant and important.

Mr. Halkias' musical reputation is based on his versatility, his enormous yet selective repertoire, his superb tone and phrasing, and finally his deep concern with passing along his music to younger musicians. He has inspired his own children and grandchildren to follow him as musicians, and his sons Petros (clarinet) and Achilleas (violin) are recognized as two of the foremost folk musicians playing in Greece today. He sometimes visits his homeland for concerts and tours; more often he appears with his brother-in-law Lazaros Harisiades and perhaps his grandson Bobbis at Crystal Palace or Oyster Bay in Queens for a community celebration. Wherever he goes there is extraordinary respect for his artistry. ■

JIMMY JAUSORO

The career of the Basque accordionist, Jimmy Jausoro, exemplifies the power of traditional art forms to energize and unify a local community. Mr. Jausoro grew up in Nampa in southwest Idaho, at that time a gathering place for Basque sheepherders, and during the 1920s and 1930s he and his friends frequented the local boarding houses and hotels listening to older men tell stories, sing their Basque songs, and play the button accordion. After trying the

Jimmy Jausoro by Bob Lorimer

small button instruments, he took his first job in order to earn the funds necessary to buy a shining big piano accordion, the first of some seven instruments he has worn out in his lifetime of playing for Basque dances and performances.

At first his repertoire included a mix of American popular tunes and Basque folk and popular music. During World War II he took his accordion with him into the United States Navy and continued to play, largely popular music. After the war, he returned to Idaho, worked on the railroad and formed a local dance band. Gradually, his thoughts turned more and more toward the music of his forebears, and in 1960 he formed a dance group named after a performing group from the Basque region in Spain where he had many times visited. The Oinkari Dancers have grown from half a dozen members in 1960 to over seventy today. Moreover, it could well be argued that being an Oinkari dancer has become a rite of passage for young Basques growing up in Boise—a positive self-identification as a Basque made public through public performance.

The general phenomenon of the local young people's ethnic performing group is, of course, widespread. What is distinguished about the Oinkari dancers has been the steady long-time musical and aesthetic participation of two senior artists—Jimmy Jausoro and his long-time accompanist and musical ally, the late Domingo Ansotegui. Every rehearsal takes place to live music provided by older artists who can speak with authority to questions of authenticity, taste, and Basque cultural standards, speaking, furthermore, in the Basque language in which many of the younger dancers are now becoming fluent. In 1983. the first Idaho State Folk Arts Award was given to Jimmy Jausoro and Domingo Ansotegui for their artistic contribution to the Basque community of Idaho and the state. ■

Mealii Kalama by Carlos Viti

Mealii Kalama

Long before the first missionaries anchored off Hawaii in 1820, the art and skill of sewing had been mastered by the islanders. Using needles of whalebone and thread twisted from coconut and other natural fibres, native men and women sewed sails and coverlets made of bark cloth, or *tapa,* adorned with striking and dramatic imprinted designs. Missionary women thus found apt pupils for their sewing techniques, notably quilting, one of the favorite New England techniques by which bedcovers are created from scraps of material left over from dress making.

Hawaiian women, however, had no scraps to work with; their native clothing consisted of draped panels of *tapa* cloth. It made little sense to them to cut whole lengths of fabric into pieces and then stitch them back together again. A creative alternative came into being: the transferring of the old *tapa* designs, easing away from the small patchwork block into a large central design usually of a single color appliqued onto a complementary backing by thousands of tiny stitches in rows half an inch apart and curving like ocean ripples against the shore.

These remarkable designs and techniques instantly identify the Hawaiian quilt as an original art form as specific to the islands as the *hula.* The effort required to make a single quilt is enormous. A year and a half of patient stitchery is not uncommon. Designs are rarely copied since they are considered to belong to the original maker and thus each quilt is a work into which such love and care has been put that it cannot be measured. Skillful quiltmakers, both men and women, are honored throughout Hawaiian society, but none more than Mealii Kalama, whose grandmother began her first instruction by requiring her granddaughter of 13 to go out into the yard and create her own design based on the bread-fruit tree. The choice was intended as a lesson based on the dual meanings of "ulu" which means not only the staple food, breadfruit, but also means "to grow."

Since her first breadfruit quilt, which took her a year and a half to finish, Mrs. Kalama has made numerous quilts, including a remarkable series of thirty exhibited at the Mauna Kea Hotel, and many other individual commissions including one for the Governor's mansion. During her long career she has taught quiltmaking and other Hawaiian crafts as well, during a thirty year period training hundreds of quilters in the Hawaiian style of quilt making. Today in retirement she continues to teach, passing along the proud tradition of Hawaiian quilting that she first learned from her grandmother long ago. ■

Lily May Ledford

March 17, 1917-July 14, 1985

Lily May Ledford grew up on a tenant farm in Powell County Kentucky, fifty miles east of Lexington. Her family made its own music, and by the time she was a teenager she had joined her sister and brother in a string band they called the Red River Ramblers, playing for local square dances up and down the Red River Gorge area. Lily May played both fiddle and banjo and she had picked up many fine old songs from her father and other relatives so that in 1936 when the Ramblers played for some northern talent scouts, Lily May was selected to come to Chicago and be on the WLS Barn Dance radio broadcast series.

Lily May Ledford by Jim Broadwater

The producer soon discussed with Lily May an idea he had long wanted to try—forming an all-girl string band. And when the Barn Dance moved to Cincinnati in 1937, he brought together Lily May, her sister Rosie and two other young women instrumentalists (later joined by sister Minnie) and called them "The Coon Creek Girls—so that people will know at once what kind of music they're going to hear." They made their debut in a famous broadcast on October 9, 1937. Lily May remembers: "It was our time. We startled the audience by being all girls—our sound was drowned out by the uproar of applause and yelling."

However, it was not just the novelty of a woman string band that was so impressive. Lily May's driving claw-hammer banjo, Rosie's strong guitar work and the high open strained mountain harmonies of the group were an exciting contrast to the sentimental home-and-mother styles of the period. This was southern country music with its bite and vigor left intact, and the old-time tradition carried into a new arena. The Coon Creek Girls represented the tradition across the country, even appearing, at the invitation of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, at the White House before the King and Queen of England. Lily May reported later that the King had "rather a long-faced, dour, deadpan look, and he worried me a little. Then as I glanced down I caught him patting his foot, ever so little, and I knew we had him."

The Coon Creek Girls as a practicing musical group broke up in 1957; Rosie has passed away and Minnie lives in Florida. Until her sudden passing July 14, 1985, Lily May continued to appear on college campuses and in school residences where her songs and instrumental styles still excited young audiences. She was an inspiration to generations of younger musicians. Pete Seeger developed his original banjo style from countless hours of listening to Lily May's early recordings and he is only one of hundreds of instrumentalists that did so. ■

LEIF MELGAARD

Leif Melgaard's story demonstrates one of the differences in the education and training of traditional artists in Europe and the U.S. He was born in Norway at the turn of the century in a peasant family and spent his childhood working on the homestead. But with the encouragement of his uncle, a talented local woodcarver, he began to carve as a child and at the age of seventeen enrolled at the Craft School of the Museum of Industrial Arts at Dakka, Norway. It was his only formal training. The six week course included two weeks of cabinet making and two weeks of carving under the tutelage of Lillevik, the master Gud-

Leif Melgaard by Minneapolis Star Tribune

brandsdal carver of that time. Gudbrandsdal carving is traditional to Norway, a carving technique of great elaboration centering around the acanthus leaf and vine motif but including grotesque animals and other figures in an elaborately improvised and imaginative style of great technical difficulty.

When he came to the United States at age twenty, he assumed he could continue his artistic training. There were, then and now, few schools where traditional folk arts could be studied in the United States, and there was no money to support an aspiring craft student. So he settled in Minneapolis where he found employment as a carpenter and cabinet maker at the Lake Street Sash and Door Company. He remained there until his retirement in 1964, but he continued his carving at home and, on especial occasions, at work when commissions requiring ornamental carving were received. One of the best known of his pieces of this period is the altar at the Norwegian Lutheran Memorial Church.

Many students of the tradition say that Leif Melgaard's work would be better known had he been willing to sell and exhibit more, and they rate him as equal if not superior to the finest European carvers in the tradition. Former Folk Arts panelist Roger Welsch visited him last year in his home: "... gradually the room was filled with an art museum's trove of spoons, bowls, boards and dishes—all made from trees he had selected in the woods himself, cut down himself, fashioned into these delicate gems himself. It turned out that he had hesitated before to show his work because his family and neighbors, from Norway to Minnesota, had always considered him an idler because he squandered his time "whittling," old-fashioned nonsense. I have come to think of the Heritage awards—perhaps incorrectly— as a recognition of a kind of spirit as well as of a degree of skill. Unselfconscious, unassuming, dedicated, philosophical, Leif Melgaard is the kind of citizen-artist who deserves this unrequested recognition. He is one of the very finest . . ." ■

Bua Xou Mua by Jan Deweese

Bua Xou Mua

Mr. Bua Xou Mua is a musician and spiritual leader of the Hmong tribe, one of America's newest immigrant groups and refugees from the war-torn mountains of Laos. His extended family includes some 150 familes who trace their descent to a common male ancestor some six generations distant. Mr. Mua is one of the few remaining elders who can recount this kin network from memory. Until recently, all the information necessary to Hmong cultural existence resided in the memories of individuals such as Bua Xou Mua who expressed it through a rich body of sacred and secular performances of traditional texts and melodies.

In the United States today the whole cultural life of the Hmong is under the stress of acculturation, the learning of an entirely unfamiliar way of life. Mr. Mua is bearing for his fellow tribesmen the radical burden of standing firm against the doubt and fear that are now burying Hmong traditional consciousness. One of his primary strategies has been to give instruction to young Hmong on the "qeej," the instrument on which the sacred texts are encoded and by so doing draw to him the young people who can, through study, assert their traditional identities and responsibilities. For among such tribal peoples, art has a especially crucial significance: it is through traditional artistic performances that entire systems of social order, morality, and the people's welfare can be expressed and absorbed.

In addition to his work with the youth of his own people, Bua Xou Mua has taken on another responsibility: the explanation of the unfamiliar ways of southeast Asia to American school children in Portland where he lives. As recent refugees and potential competitors vie for scarce employment, the Hmong have had to face discrimination and even anger in some American communities. Mr. Mua has bravely stepped forward to present the beautiful image of Hmong music and dance in many neighborhoods where the arts of his people would never be known. Though he enters every classroom saying "I shy. I shy. Pronunciation no good," the children seem to understand him and respond to the depth and passion of Hmong poetry:

I, the only child, have no relative.
The sky will darken.
I, the only child, will go with the wild spirits
To embrace a drowsiness.
The sky will dim.
I, the orphan child, will go with the ghosts
To embrace a sleep.

Bua Xou Mua occupies a unique moment in the history of his Hmong people, a refugee from the past and from the future, the keeper of a still vital key of artistic repertoire and performance through which his people may yet continue to maintain their cultural identity in a strange land. ■

Julio Negron

Don Julio Negrón-Rivera was reared in a family of traditional musicians and artisans hailing from the small town of Morovis, Puerto Rico, situated high in the island's mountainous hinterlands. His grandparents, Tomás Negrón and María Prágedes, were musicians and singers who throughout their lives sang the beautiful and heartfelt songs dedicated to the Virgen del Carmen that the people of Morovis had created and passed down through generations. His parents, Eusebio and Carmen Negron, in addition to carrying on the local musical traditions, were also farmers skilled at cultivating coffee trees and subsistence crops on the steep tropical highland slopes. Along with the handmade tools he created to pit and process his coffee beans, don Eusebio also make fine *cuatros*, the uniquely shaped ten-string guitar that has become known as the national musical instrument of Puerto Rico. Don Julio inherited

Julio Negron Rivera by Walter Murray-Chiesa

all of these skills and more from his family predecessors.

In the recognition and revival of traditional Puerto Rican culture that followed the founding of the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture in 1955, Julio Negrón became recognized throughout the island as an outstanding instrument maker, musician, and head of one of the country's most talented musical families. He has received numerous awards for his *cuatro*, *tiples* (small soprano guitar), six-string guitars, and *bordonúas* (bass guitar) made in the modest workshop next to his home. Both alone and in the company of his wife, Mercedes, and five children, he has performed regularly in Morovis and throughout the island, bringing the *jíbaro* (mountain Hispanic) musical forms of *seis*, *aguinaldo*, *vals*, and religious-inspired song to many. Don Julio Negrón and his family embody much of the essence of Puerto Rican identity, and in the words of the island's crafts coordinator, Walter Murray Chiesa, "Everything of value which we can think of pertaining to our cultural past—the hospitality, generosity, the piety, the high religious faith, the art of farming, the richness of our folkloric values, the wisdom and understanding and the kindness of our people—are all reflected in this unique family . . . ."■

Glenn Ohrlin

Glenn Ohrlin was born in 1926 in Minneapolis and at age fourteen moved to California with his family. Two years later, he left home to become a buckaroo in Nevada, and he has been a working cowboy ever since, first as a ranch hand, then as rodeo circuit rider, and now as the owner of a ranch near Mountain View, Arkansas, where he lives in a stone house that he built himself.

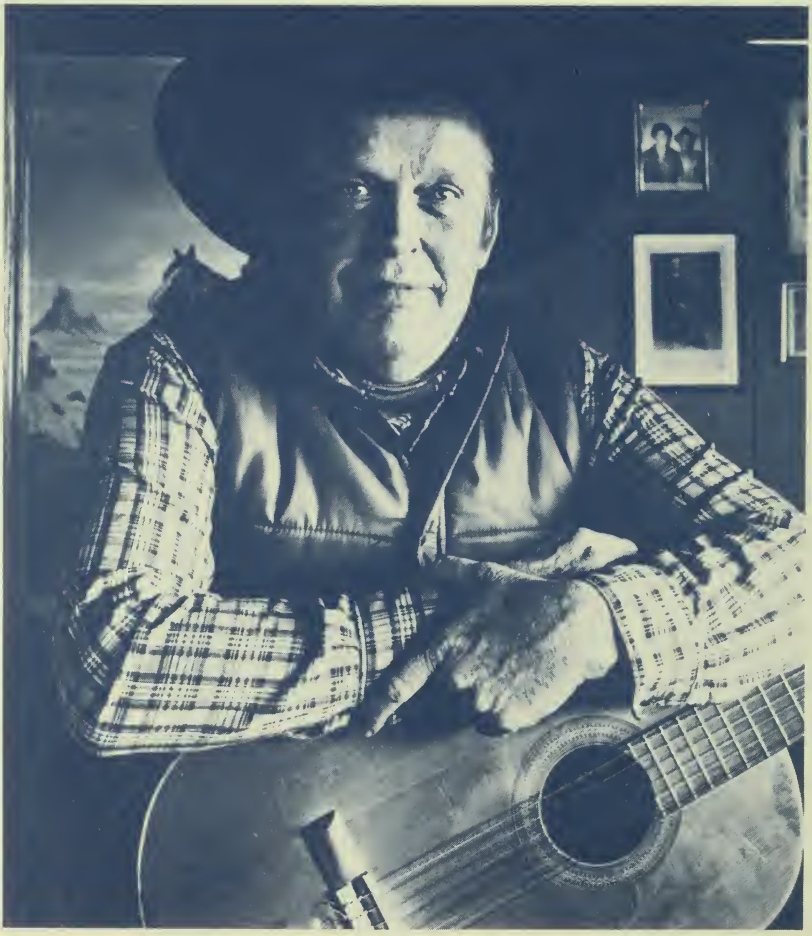
Glenn Ohrlin is a master raconteur, specializing in tall tales delivered in classic dead-pan style. He is also an excellent artist with pen and ink or paints and illustrated his own book, *The Hell-Bound Train*. (University of Illinois Press), with detailed and loving drawings of cowboys and their gear. He is best known, however, as a collector and performer of cowboy songs, some 100 of which he put into his book along with his personal recollections of cowboy life and lore.

Glenn Ohrlin's song repertoire stems from material that originated in the period 1875-1925—traditional British ballads carried west, mid-19th century sentimental melodies, journalistic poetry, bawdy songs and hobo and cowpuncher songs. He sings them in a classic unornamented western style and accompanies them with understated guitar rhythms. This is the laconic, tough, masculine style of western balladry at its peak, powerful and strongly affecting, in part because of its lack of adornment. It is also deceptive; like many such western artists Glenn Ohrlin has a sly

wit that sneaks up and catches the listener unaware.

Glenn Ohrlin was host and a performer for *The Cowboy Tour*, a group of eight working and retired cowboys who travelled over 30,000 miles by road in the West during 1983 and 1984, bringing tall tales, fiddling, songs, jokes and cowboy poetry to small towns with ranching traditions. During that same period, he worked with a group of western folklorists who organized the successful Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada, in January of this year. He represented cowboy poets as the program was drawn up and helped select the final list of artists to be invited. At the Gathering he performed and acted as a host.

He travels extensively by pickup truck in the West and Glenn Ohrlin has a highway rule: if there is more than one road to a place he will go by the one he has not travelled and never mind if it is a bit longer and the road narrow. ■



Glenn Ohrlin by Andrew Kilgore

Henry Townsend

Henry Townsend was born on October 27, 1909 in Shelby, Mississippi, the third son of Allen and Omelia Townsend. Allen Townsend played guitar and accordion and sang delta blues songs. When Henry was very young his family moved to Future City, Illinois, a notorious shanty town very near the rail and river town of Cairo. After a series of confrontations with his father, a man of violent temper, Henry left home walking north along Highway 3, stopping in small towns along the way to hustle jobs and food. He was nine years old when he started. "I came to be a man about age nine. I had to." By 1921 he had arrived in St. Louis, where his working and artistic life was to center.

During the 1920s, St. Louis boasted an active blues scene; such figures as Roosevelt Sykes, Big Joe Williams, Sonny Boy Williamson and Lonnie Johnson were at that time developing a style that came to be identified with St. Louis.

Henry Townsend by Kathy James

It combined the acoustic string techniques of the delta country blues with a driving piano-guitar interplay, foreshadowing more urbanized sounds such as the later Chicago blues bands. Henry Townsend took up first guitar and then piano; eventually he accompanied most of the stars of the era both in live performances and in recordings. His reputation grew until during the year of 1935 he appeared on 35 different recordings, but by the mid-fifties, the heyday of St. Louis blues had passed, and Townsend was forced to seek other work.

In the old sad story so common to black musicians, Townsend found himself more appreciated as a musician in Europe than in his own country. During the sixties he was interviewed and recorded by the British blues authority, Paul Oliver, and he was featured in several British films, *Blues Like Showers of Rain* and *The Devil's Music—a History of the Blues.* His concerts in Europe have long attracted large audiences, and recently his appearances at the Smithsonian and National Folk Festivals have somewhat rectified his lack of national recognition. Many blues authorities now consider him the finest living representative of the country blues who has been, as he notes ironically, "rediscovered three or four times."

Today Henry Townsend lives still in his beloved St. Louis with his wife Vernell, a fine blues singer in her own right. An articulate spokeman for the blues, he is frequently featured in classes and seminars, speaking about the history of the blues. He is generous with his musical knowledge and has been known to take aspiring young musicians into his home for months at a time. A superb musician, a thoughtful and kindly man, Henry Townsend is a worthy exemplar of one of America's most important indigenous traditions. ■

Horace "Spoons" Williams by Roland Freeman

Horace "Spoons" Williams

Horace Williams, known in Philadelphia's black communities as "Spoons" was born 74 years ago in Newberry County, South Carolina. The son of an impoverished sharecropping family, he began making music at an early age, coaxing sounds from such homemade instruments as jugs and tin pans. "Music was all I had growing up" he recalls. "Music and animals. I had to do something to amuse myself. I'd play my spoons, make up some stories, and it was like cutting a hole in the clouds to let the sun shine through."

At thirteen he left home and traveled across the eastern seaboard scuffling for work, ever moving north. He laid railroad track and built roads, even mined coal for a short period, and worked as a fisherman, pulling menhaden nets off the Virginia coast. All the while he continued his music, adding bones and spoons to his intrumental repertoire, exploring ever greater tonal variation and rhythmic complexities, accompanying blues guitarists, brass bands, and even gospel quartets when the opportunity arose. During this time he also mastered the art of monologue recitation, performing not only traditional Afro-American toasts but long narrative poems of his own composition, pieces addressing in rhyme his experiences as a black man in a white man's world.

In recent years, Mr. Williams has made an effort to bring his music and poems to wider audiences than the streets of Philadelphia where he usually performs, moving beyond his neighborhood to such forums as the National Storytelling Festival and the Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife. His reception everywhere has been enthusiastic, especially among Blacks who recognize the extraordinary rhythmic subtlety of his percussion playing and the strong statements of black pride that emerge in his improvised poetry.

In 1984 Mr. Williams was filmed by a British *Broadcasting Corporation* film crew producing a major documentary series on the history of the English language. One of the series' programs deals with the history of Black American English and it was here that Mr. Williams' work was included. The producer wrote, "The two days we spend filming Horace Williams were among the most memorable of my professional career . . . his spoon playing kept us spellbound for hours while the rhymes and poems he has made up were sometimes hilarious and sometimes deeply moving . . . . In my view, Spoons is an important and powerful folk artist . . . ." ■

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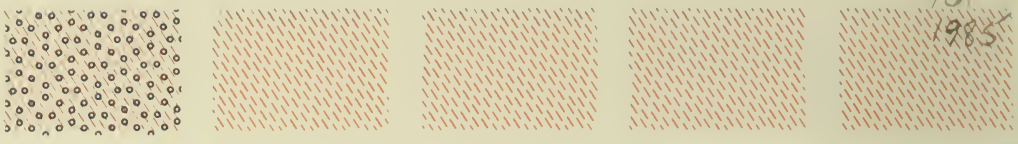

This ceremony and related activities have been planned with the assistance of the National Council for the Traditional Arts, Inc. (NCTA), John Holum, Chairman.

National Heritage Fellowships are open to exemplary master folk artists and artisans who are nominated by one or more citizens for the one-time-only awards. Qualifying criteria are authenticity, excellence, and significance within a particular artistic tradition. Those nominated should have a record of ongoing artistic accomplishment at a level which would make them worthy of national recognition. Selection of the fellows is by peer panel review from among those nominated.

For information about nominating a folk artist or artisan for a fellowship, write:

National Heritage Fellowships
Folk Arts Program
The National Endowment for the Arts
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20506

DESIGN BY KEVIN OSBORN, ARLINGTON, VA.